

## **Vignette twenty-one**

One of the things with being a support worker is this providing structure in people's lives, saying, what do you want to do. For me there were a few issues with her – she was an older woman – she was Maori – and the other things was she was a nurturer. So she would knit for staff and for clients, she would bake for people. She was always doing something for other people. So to try and get her to find out what she liked, and if you came out and said to her – “what do you want to do or what would you like?” – it would be “I don't know”. So I felt there was a perceived thing of you can't do anything with her, she's happy with her knitting and baking. And I thought 'no'. Over a period of time I got her trust and I found out things about her life. It would never have happened to me because I'm a very sit down and get out your pen and paper and write things down. With her, I had to catch her. It had to be the right moment. One day she was sitting outside in the sun. It was very quiet and I sat down beside her and just sat with her and waited. I know what came from her – she gave me a story about how, in her childhood, something about not having shoes. And just through a roundabout process I realized that one thing that she really needed at the moment was shoes. But she never, ever asked for anything. So it was accidental and so one thing we could work on was to look for some shoes for her. Just through things about her life – like she was an amazing dancer, she loved music and dancing. She'd gone to a Maori girls school up north and she'd loved singing and dancing there. We had an end of year staff/client picnic. We had been given all this money and the caterers had carved off all this meat, brought along salads, meat and puddings. We were all outside our building and then one of the support workers put on some music. And it was music that everybody seemed to like and we all just ended up having a bit of a groove, a bit of a boogie. And I loved it and there were two other support workers, young students and they were quite coordinated and they were dancing and an ex-gang member with dreads who was a client – very quiet, very shy, not a lot of interaction – he had a bit of a groove. And there she was an amazing mover. It was just wonderful, I couldn't stop smiling. It was just an absolutely fantastic interaction – all spontaneous.